

Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies

REDES 2003

Research and Education in Defense and Security Studies

October 28-30, 2003, Santiago, Chile

Panel: Intelligence and New Threats

Intelligence management and the decision making process: views and comments based on the Colombian experience.

**Andres Saenz
US - Colombia**

The statements and opinions presented by the authors of "REDES 2003 Academic Papers", do NOT represent the views of the Department of Defense (DoD), the National Defense University (NDU) or the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (CHDS). Any release, quotation or extraction for publication must be coordinated with the author of the document. Any use of these materials outside of the context of this seminar is NOT authorized.

Intelligence management and the decision making process: views and comments based on the Colombian experience.

Presented by: Andres F. Saenz (CHDS)

Colombia has suffered for many years the negative effects of historic and multiple manifestations of violence affecting the institutional stability of its state and the security and well being of its people. Most recently, the Colombian guerrilla organizations and other illegal armed groups had established a close and profitable relationship with the drug business generating a feeling of security uncertainty at almost every level. Under these circumstances, the Colombian government has centered its attention towards the formulation of effective political instruments to undermine the negative effects of those actors contesting its legitimacy and monopoly over the use of force. In this scenario, the use and management of intelligence within policy making can become an instrument that Colombian policy makers can use to reconstruct the legitimate authority of the state, build-up more effective institutional capabilities, and regain territorial unity to advance towards the long and awaited conclusion of this chronic and exhausting conflict.

Introduction

Colombia's internal guerrilla war has intensified dramatically during the last years. Many agree that the internal conflict is escalating in ways that not only affect Colombia's own interest but also the United States and the regional community of nations.¹ Recent tactics and capabilities developed by illegal groups operating inside the country—particularly FARC- have advanced dangerously to new levels. Most of their objectives have shifted from an armed political struggle towards a protracted war for territory and control of illegal activities with increasingly violent and criminal components. Current efforts to interrupt the lifelines supporting these groups focus on disrupting the networks that provide them financial power and logistical capabilities.

For too long the policy to attend this issue remained strongly influenced by a three-pronged policy which simultaneously applied the benefits of sustaining a peace negotiation process with armed groups combined with a counter-narcotics agenda, close but differentiated, from classical definitions of a counterinsurgency campaign. The separation between the counter-narcotics and counterinsurgency components of Plan Colombia proved to Colombian and United States officials involved in its implementation that such division remained almost non-existent and difficult to sustain.

¹ President Alvaro Uribe Velez was sworn to office on August 2002. Considering the failed results and expectations obtained from the agreement that allowed former President Pastrana to create a demilitarised (DMZ) zone for the discussion of a peace agenda with FARC. Fears of a probable spill over effect of the Colombian conflict in neighbour countries -which already where facing their own share of domestic problems- became more prominent. Plan Colombia was perceived by the majority of its neighbouring countries as a escalating threat against their own security and stability. Although the plan itself was not the real threat, many voices inside these countries failed to understand that the illegal groups and the coca crops protected by them were the real and main concern of the plan. Most recently such fears have diminished but have not completely disappeared. Gradually and under individual country basis, the Colombian and United States government have initiated multilateral efforts to expand the original reach of Plan Colombian and adapt it in its second phase as a regional initiative. Most of these countries may contribute and participate with plans to prevent and curtail the expansion of such threats across borders.

Many in both countries interpreted this conceptual separation as a screen to achieve US bi-partisan support necessary to keep alive the project.

Today as a result of the changes in the global security agenda and current policies to stop terrorist groups with trans-national reach, this country has been officially included in the 'hot-spots' list of global campaigns against terrorism. Colombian insurgents share the cumbersome costs of being included in the US State Department list of international terrorist organizations. This situation has facilitated means and methods to expand and increase even further levels of cooperation between both countries in matters considered of strategic significance and not limited exclusively to counter-narcotics assessments and operations. For example, allowing expanded authority in Colombia is considered essential in intelligence sharing and has proven to be pivotal in ratifying the drug-guerrilla link and in conducting joint military operations. The new ways and mechanisms to understand the critical internal situation in Colombia has helped to unveil solid evidence about the ways in which insurgent forces are deeply involved in the drug trade and how this has allow them to use the same clandestine and complex networks exploited also by terrorist organizations. Both threats, under this new vision, are part of symmetrical fronts in the war against illegal drugs trade and the interruption of trafficking of weapons and explosives. Colombia's democratic security strategy recognizes both, terrorism and illegal drugs as interrelated threats with no respect for borders or either the stability of democratic institutions and lives of its citizens.²

Colombia's present situation and the indisputable necessity of preserving its institutional stability and security of its people demands a precise, articulate and coherent policy related to the collection, assessment, coordination and dissemination of privileged information at the highest levels of government. The definition of intelligence considered for this paper would consist -in its derivative political sense -of a component of statecraft that focus upon the need of one politically unified community to have reliable information, knowledge, or "intelligence" about other individuals or societies in its environment.³ These instruments and components of statecraft- according to Bozeman- are also the sum of human dispositions, doctrines, policies, institutions, processes, and operations designed to assure the '...governance, security, and survival of a politically unified human group.'⁴

For the case under consideration, intelligence is considered an instrument that can contribute to the success or failure of political and military decisions.⁵ It also includes important socio-economic considerations that are not limited exclusively to the traditional tasking, collection and assessment of tactical or secret information. Intelligence according to the doctrinal guidelines established by the Colombian government, is the internal and external information required by the state to prevent and act upon any sources of violence that might endanger the security or threaten the security of the constitutional order.⁶ The type of intelligence proposed for this analysis

² Other threats listed in this public policy document include illicit finances, arms trafficking, kidnapping, extortion and homicide. For the Alvaro Uribe government from the threats of terrorism and the drugs trade, derive all the rest. *Democratic Security Summary*. Republic of Colombia, 2003. P. 4.

³ Adda Bozeman, *Strategic Intelligence and Statecraft*, (New York: Brassey's, 1992), p. 1.

⁴ Ibid ,p. 1.

⁵ Shlomo Gazit, 'Intelligence Estimates and the Decision -Maker', *Journal of Intelligence and National Affairs*. 1998.

⁶ Although this definition includes the '...external information' component, one of the most distinguishable shortcomings of the Colombian intelligence architecture is the non -existing assessment or

would go far beyond the boundaries of secrecy with the main purpose of being employed usefully and illuminatingly in connection with policy formulation and the decision making process at highest levels.⁷

Aim. This paper would provide a analytical account of the relationship between the intelligence capabilities of the Colombian government and their influence upon the decision making process throughout the governments of Cesar Gaviria, Ernesto Samper, Andrés Pastrana and Alvaro Uribe Velez. The analysis would try to answer if there is a coherent relationship between the intelligence structures and the decision making process at the highest levels of government in the Colombian case.

Key players.

Colombia is being affected by three simultaneous wars: the violence and corruption generated by drug traffickers, insurgents and paramilitary self - defense organizations.⁸ Across these three actors different sub-groups and networks struggle to accomplish their own share of strategic objectives and plans. They are also the most important source of concern for the Colombian security and intelligence services.⁹ Unfortunately, for almost two decades Colombia has become one of the main engines driving the international drug trade economy fuelled mostly by the United States voracious demand for cocaine. The drug trafficking problem that originated during the 1970's still remains as a central matter of concern and attention in the bi-lateral security agenda.

The FARC- Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia- and the ELN- National Liberation Army- are two of the hemisphere's oldest insurgencies with considerable financial and military capabilities. Recent reports estimate the manpower of FARC in approximately 16.900. This group specializes in armed attacks against Colombian political and military targets. Most recently the level of intensity of their terrorist campaigns have increased and shifted towards more populated urban areas- where civilians are frequently accounted as innocent victims-.¹⁰ They are well trained, equipped and frequently launch coordinated attacks on towns, remote police stations and military barracks. FARC operational tactics include bombing and assaults on local rural banks, planned attacks on vital energy infrastructure, blocking of major roads and the development of unconventional techniques such as bombs made of gas canisters.

capacities for collecting, processing and analysis of intelligence in the foreign and external dimensions. Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (DAS). <http://www.das.gov.co>, downloaded , 4th of June 2000.

⁷ Reginald Hibbert, ' Intelligence and Policy', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 5, No.1. January 1990, p.111.

⁸ G. Marcella.' The United States and Colombia: the Journey from Ambiguity to Strategic Clarity', *Shaping the Regional Security Environment in Latin America*, Strategic Studies Institute- US Army War College. May 2004.

⁹ Despite of being a country immersed for many years in a counterinsurgency campaign there are still few available studies about the organizational and strategic plans of these armed organizations. A good and comprehensive analysis of the internal organizational process which has permitted the survival and configuration of military and financial plans for the ELN as an armed entity can be found in Andres Peñate's work on the ELN "El Sendero Estrategico del ELN" (1999) and Marta Harneker (1988) book on the ELN.

¹⁰ They include terrorist violence against elected officials, in 2002, 144 political leaders and officials were murdered by illegal armed groups (83 by the FARC and 23 by the AUC). Furthermore, 124 government officials and political leaders , including a female presidential candidate, were kidnapped (82 by the FARC, 30 by the ELN and 6 by the AUC).

They are also known to be self-funded through narco-trafficking, extortion, robberies and ransoms. Their daily financial transactions are 'cleaned' through legitimate business used frequently as covers for money laundering purposes and purchase of important logistical supplies. FARC have manage to achieve a surprisingly attack capability that involves co-ordinated and simultaneous offensives by massing forces against multiple high profile targets, although lately they have preferred traditional guerrilla 'hit and run' tactics combined with urban campaigns in identified urban and troubled social areas in the major cities slums.¹¹

The ELN consists of approximately 3,500 combatants and the majority of its operations include the kidnapping of wealthy ranchers and industrialists, assassinations of military and political officers, armed robberies, illegal taxation of natural and mineral resources exploration such as gold, bombing, sabotage of oil pipelines, business and attacks to power pylons. This organization strategic template ironically emerged from two historical moments and military defeats in this groups history that differentiated its doctrinal thinking away from the combinations of all means of armed struggle doctrine pursued by FARC; both, the attack in Simacota, which gave birth to the ELN, and their military defeat in operation Anori became strategic turning points for the military and doctrinal agenda of this group. However its true strength emerged from what became known as *clientelismo armado*, a strategy which allow them to conquer and influence local authorities by sharing political power with elected officials through intimidation, extortion, corruption and indiscriminative use of force in prosperous regions.

Both groups sum nearly 19.000 combatants and have combined revenues estimated in a range between US\$370 and US\$680 million a year, an amount that can vary depending of the economic features common to the cycle of drug trafficking. The lack of a common figure in the calculation of such an important indicator demonstrates a shortcoming of both, statistical information and analysis of an essential and identified component for the survival or end of illegal groups operating in Colombia.¹² Important and up-dated questions such as how much these groups spend in the support of its bureaucratic machinery, or how much and in which countries they spend their resources for international diplomatic efforts or how autonomous are the chief of financial matters in their day to day operations have been answered in a incomplete fashion and certainly not as result of a systemic or sustained assessment capability produced by the intelligence system.

The FARC has a long-standing platform of demands that call for a more democratic, pluralist and patriotic government. As for the ELN, it shares some of these objectives, however the question of natural resources, especially petroleum, is more central to them. What seems to be clear is that as from the combination of insurgency, narcotics, impunity and inefficient government presence a space was created for the emergence of another disturbing actor in the conflict: the paramilitary or self- defense forces which sum approximately 13,000. These militias, present in vast areas of the country, are

¹¹ Colombian Armed Force's capabilities to detect large concentration of guerrilla groups have improved thanks to better aerial surveillance capabilities, an advantage

¹² The most recent studies available regarding the income of the guerrilla groups in Colombia are from 1998, the work from Juan Carlos Echeverri (1998), Martha Badel and Edgar Trujillo (1998) are consistent and good examples of in-depth analysis of the economic variables and indicators of profits earned by guerrilla groups. Another example is the report of the Inter-Institutional Committee for the Fight Against the Subversive Groups Finances elaborated by DAS, published also in 1998. The author did not found more recent official reports that can provide consolidated statistical information or more updated figures.

increasingly linked and deeply involved in narco-trafficking. Their existence in this scenario challenge even further the already dispersed authority of the Colombian State by expanding in ways that are linked directly to the territorial presence of the insurgent groups. Recently, they have fragmented into several groups and some members of its leadership are currently exploring a possible peace agreement that could include the demobilization of many of its blocs as an alternative to past conflict resolution models applied throughout the history of this conflict.

Last but certainly not least, criminal and drug trafficking groups deserve to be included also in this list. Most of these groups have fragmented as a result of the persecution, incarceration and demise of important leaders and cadres operating within the major drug cartels of the late 80's and early 90's. Authorities calculated in 2002 that approximately 162 drug-trafficking organizations with over 4,000 members and increasing links with international criminal syndicates connected with global terrorist networks are currently operating in the country. All these groups under the new democratic security strategy share a close and beneficial association with drug trafficking.

Intelligence Machinery Organization in Colombia

The bureaucratic organization of the Colombian intelligence community and its intelligence requirements must be discussed briefly. This paper have considered the intelligence requirements in two dimensions: strategic and at the operational level. Both of them are closely interconnected in the decision-making process but at the same time they are organised differently within the Colombian bureaucratic structures.

In the political dimension, the organism responsible for the production and assessment of intelligence for the government decision making process in security matters is the Administrative Department of Security (DAS). It makes part of those Ministries and agencies of government that belong to the Executive branch of power.¹³ Its functions include co-operation and intelligence assistance with the General Attorney's Office and other judiciary investigative units. Additional organizations that have been created for this matters are the Presidential Advisory for Citizen Security and Connivance (former Advisory for National Defense and Security) included inside the executive branch of power. Until the Pastrana administration the office attended the meeting of the Superior Council of Security assisting the President. Other special agencies which function inside the Executive power jurisdiction and which were indirectly benefited form the use of intelligence are the High Commissioner for Peace Office and the anti- kidnapping czar office. It must be also mentioned that the President in Colombia is under permanent contact (via formal and non formal channels) with his Armed Forces and commanders in matters regarding security, public order and intelligence.

At the operational level, each one of the branches of the Colombian Armed Forces counts with their own intelligence departments. The National Police intelligence directorate -Dipol- has its own Intelligence Central under the supervision of a intelligence director subordinated to the Director of the National Police. The directorate work has been valuable in the last five years in the fight against narco-traffickers and

¹³ D.A.S, ' El DAS le escucha', p.4.

recently has become most active with the Army in counter narcotics joint operations with other forces including the Police Anti Narcotics Directorate.¹⁴

The Army, Navy and Air Force intelligence departments are submitted to a National Council for Intelligence under the direction and coordination of the Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Minister of Defense. Both, Navy and Airforce are also engaged in the overall operational effort through cooperation in joint operations with other forces in the field of river patrolling, SIGINT and COMINT under technical assistance of the US Southern Command (SouthCom) and other intelligence agencies.¹⁵ There is also a Superior Council of Intelligence between forces and regional ad-hoc Councils of Security and Intelligence. The President's Intelligence Committee has been inactive revealing a lack in continuity that would be discussed further. The Army Intelligence activities were co-ordinated through the XX Intelligence Brigade in Bogota until its dissolution in December 1998.¹⁶ The direction of intelligence activities for the Army nowadays is being conducted through a Director of Army Intelligence assigned to the Central Army Command.

At tactical and operational levels the Army has become the centre of attention due to the insurgency activity and its close relationship with the drug trafficking and illicit crops problem. In 1998 the Commander of the Armed Forces created the Joint Intelligence Central of the Military Forces - Central de Inteligencia de las Fuerzas Militares (CIC)- at the Tres Esquinas Military base in the department of Cauca.¹⁷ During the same year the Army created a special anti narcotics commando, Comando Especial del Ejército (CEE), a 80 strong quick reaction rural/urban anti narcotics unit with military assistance from the US. Most of its field information is provided by Military Intelligence gathered from CIC and the Central Army Command.¹⁸ The battalion is the first of three that are in operation throughout 2000 and 2001 under the United States military assistance program provided by the Plan Colombia initiative.¹⁹

From its institutional arrangement and organization it could be said, that the intelligence community in Colombia respond to a structure concentrated in both, internal security and specific operational level requirements. The diverse and multiple sources of internal unrest behind them have already been discussed. Nonetheless and for purpose of this paper, it must be said that the intelligence instruments available for the Colombian government do not respond completely to a comprehensive and articulate institutional arrangement at strategic levels. Furthermore, a closer look into this intelligence model reveals that the relationship between decision-making and intelligence possess components which limit its effectiveness as an instrument of power for dealing with security and defense. The intelligence reforms and plans introduced during the Gaviria administration and most recent events can be helpful for illustrating this argument. Throughout the following section the decision making process relationship with intelligence would be considered in its the political and operational

¹⁴ Revista Cambio, 'Tras mi salida', p.2.

¹⁵ Navy Vessel Captain, Alfonso Díaz. Naval Attaché for the Colombian Embassy in Washington D.C. Personal Interview, June 2000. Washington D.C

¹⁶ Intelligence Monitor, *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol. 12, No. 1, January 1999.

¹⁷ 'El Cerebro de la Guerra', "The War Brain", *Revista Cambio*, January 2000, p. 26.

¹⁸ S. Salisbury, 'SEALs, DEA break new ground in Colombia', *JIR*, Vol. 12, No.1, January 2000, p. 7.

¹⁹ Fact Sheet: *U.S. Outlines Proposal to Support Plan Colombia*. Distributed by the Office of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State, March 2000. <http://www.usinfo.state.gov>, file downloaded June 23rd 2000.

dimensions. Both are interconnected but still respond to different priorities and institutional mentalities.

Antecedents and institutional arrangements

Colombia's government concern for intelligence matters has not been completely ignored. In 1953 the Servicio de Inteligencia Colombiana *Colombian Intelligence Service* (SIC) was created and established by presidential decree.²⁰ The SIC hold national jurisdiction throughout the territory and its central function dealt with the security of the state and its protection from external threats. This service was also tasked to function and conduct special investigations that included the management of immigration services and rural security at national levels. In 1960 it was transformed and renamed into the Administrative Department of Security (DAS) *Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad*. Unfortunately, DAS functions remained vague and too general for almost three decades, they hardly provided an adequate and coherent support for decision making since the government didn't found intelligence requirements imperative for its daily matters for many years to come. Nevertheless its creation resulting from important counterinsurgency efforts and programs oriented and conducted previously during the late 1950's and mid 1960's.

The special military assistance missions send by the US Army in the early 1960's under the command of General William Yardborough and the Special Survey Teams from CIA, became important milestones for the evaluation and implementation of counterinsurgency campaigns that contributed to attend early subversive manifestations threatening the Colombian government.²¹ Regarding intelligence matters these and subsequent missions provided important corrective recommendations for an effective military intelligence service and a better collaboration of the civilian intelligence services component. These special survey teams provided valuable input used later in an Internal Defense Plan that integrated military efforts with economic, social and political aspects of the country's internal security problem and later became known as Plan Lazo. The achievement of internal stability – according to these documents and plans- could only be possible by coordinating military and law-enforcement activities with parallel efforts to reduce social, political and economic injustice issues. Other recommendations of the special survey teams and missions advising the government at that time noticed that the president did not received briefings about intelligence and that the existing intelligence civilian service was inefficient and not responsive in addressing these matters.

²⁰ D.A.S. , 'Historia: El DAS le escucha y actúa por usted', *Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad*, <http://www.das.gov.co> , downloaded June 21st 2000.p. 1.

²¹ The request for special military teams evaluating the origins and manifestation of violence in the country occurred during the government of president Alberto Lleras Camargo. Previous to the arrival of the Yardborough mission, a special survey team of specialist explored and conducted an on-the ground study of the situation in Colombia in 1959. The threat of the armed groups operating in the country and fears of the expansion of communism boosted the decision to look for external assistance in the evaluation and response of the growing internal insurgency problem. President Lleras commitment and political will to address the escalating violence problem were essential for posterior recommendations produced by these special teams concerning security capabilities of the country. See also Dennis M. Rempe, “ The Past as Prologue: A History of U.S Counterinsurgency Policy in Colombia, 1958-66”, Strategic Studies Institute- U.S Army War College, Carlisle,PA. March 2002.

At highest levels of policy-making, the government of Alberto Lleras Camargo introduced significant modifications to the organization of the agencies involved in the planning and management of internal security and defense policy. The most important perhaps was norm. No. 256 of 1960 which re-organized the Superior Council of National Defense *Consejo Superior de Defensa Nacional* into a consultancy organ serving the Ministry of War (later changed to Ministry of Defense). The norm and rules directing the council, that included the participation of other ministries (Foreign Affairs and Finance) in the regular sessions and meetings, were included in decree No. 1705 of 1960. The presidency of the council was assigned to the Minister of War office and the permanent secretary remained under the control of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, becoming the most important mechanism available for advising the minister of war in security and military matters. By that time the DAS was already functioning and performing special investigations objectives that included the management of immigration services and rural security at national levels. From this re-organization of defense and security consultancy organs, the DAS was identified as the agency to be assisted in the evaluation of overall policies regarding national security matters by the National Security Council *Consejo Nacional de Seguridad*. In other words, the National Security Council reformed in 1960 was intended to serve as a civilian organ that would assist and advise DAS in security matters.

However, specific functions regarding the management and scope of strategic intelligence matters were not provided or even contemplated, instead this agency was given investigative and policing roles. Moreover, the existing intelligence collaboration between law enforcement and military intelligence was confusing and very limited. It integrated intelligence and counter-intelligence functions including counterinsurgency operations across the different services, however, law enforcement and criminal matters remained separated and conducted by the National Police and its F-2 intelligence department. Under these conditions the collaboration and integration of joint efforts in intelligence matters became a common feature across the Armed Services. It was characterized by a strong tendency to apply most efforts in tactical intelligence programs and security operations under the template of classic counterinsurgency campaigns. As a result its impact remained limited. It neither promoted innovative and inclusive alternatives to organize these plans at strategic or higher levels of decision-making.

Nevertheless it must be noted that later during that period another initiative emerged from the military side of the equation. Plan Lazo established an important benchmark that permitted the initiation of early inter-agency and inter-institutional efforts against the internal manifestations of violence affecting the country. Plan Lazo proposed in 1967 the creation of norm No. 978, which main objective was to support the creation of a National Intelligence Board (Junta Nacional de Inteligencia) with regional chapters where civilian and military authorities could work together in intelligence planning and operations. Unfortunately the norm was not implemented and it was re-invented and replaced by another initiative in 1972, norm No. 050.²² This discontinuity demonstrated a tendency from behalf of the military leadership to exclude or postpone measures that could involve civilian participation in the conduction of these affairs. A problem

²² The “decreto 050” reactivated the intelligence boards and regional chapters considered in the earlier norm, however its direction changed, the head of the intelligence section (Departamento 2) of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was the main coordinator of these activities instead of the chief of the Joint Staff. It also limited the participation of other civilians from other ministries within the national board.

aggravated even further by the increasing levels of autonomy given to the military for managing defense and security matters. This also delayed even further other possibilities for consolidating programs that could promote or impact the discussion and elaboration of strategic documents or programs produced in partnership and close collaboration with civilian authorities and policy-makers.

It took some years to observe a reactivation and commitment towards programs managed from the highest levels of government and which dealt directly with the management and planning of the internal security and defense policy. The most significant contemplated the ratification and reactivation of the National Security Council as a tool available for defense policy planning. This was implemented under the government of president Misael Pastrana Borrero. In 1972 law No. 2046 established and introduced significant changes to this council by transforming it into a coordination organ responsible to act upon issues related to the management of internal security. The council was directed by the Ministry of Interior office and also included in its regular meetings the director of DAS, the ministers of Foreign Affairs, Justice and Defense. It assumed the functions of an organ from the central government administration responsible for the management of national security and internal security matters²³ Unfortunately, the civilian participation in such matters remained low and severely limited to the management of social protests -common at that time- and to some and very specific domestic security matters. In the other hand the military maintained an exclusive domain of military issues such as the fight against insurgency - including also intelligence management- and traditional defence matters. As a result the council only meet in cases of immediate emergencies and most of the times it was convened there was an obvious ambivalence of the roles and issues that the Minister of Interior should manage. Specially in issues of domestic security and public order “*orden publico*”, while the Armed Forces dealt with those that were supposed to be attended by the military.

During 1974, the presidential decree No.1573 of the same year, established the classification of military documentation. It is probably the only evidence of a conceptual matrix for the elaboration and planning of national security initiatives between 1958 and 1990. However, a factor that diminished its effectiveness and usefulness was its temporary nature. It was not either continued or implemented afterwards. Nevertheless, it became the only reference of the elaboration of an official doctrine dealing with classification of documentation and records for the management of national security until 1991.²⁴

The governments that followed observed early degrees of intensification of the internal struggle and of the actors involved. For instance, Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala presidential term experimented an intensification of the available tools and doctrinal means to wage war against the insurgents groups. In 1978 Turbay's government implemented legislative decree 1923, also known as the “*estatuto de seguridad*”, a law that provided autonomous power to the military in the management of internal security and defense matters. This period also observed constant violations of human rights towards sectors and groups of society believed to be close and supportive to the revolutionary and leftist ideals of the insurgency. This situation exemplified a clear application of the National Security Doctrine in the country. Rebel groups such as FARC and M-19 were almost

²³ Francisco Leal, ' Defensa y Seguridad ',p. 145.

²⁴ F. Leal, ' Defensa y Seguridad', p. 148.

defeated mostly because of the implementation and combination of un-orthodox methods such as torture, intimidation and political persecution of individuals suspected to be supportive of these groups.

This internal intensification of the powers given to the Armed Forces provided them special jurisdiction to conduct investigations and preventive detentions, including prosecution of civilians by military tribunals. Military intelligence played a prominent role in these matters. At highest levels of government intelligence planning and execution was exclusively conducted by the military with the tacit approval of the government. This period also observed the application of sophisticated military urban operations by groups such as M-19 that helped to sustain the group's support status and support from the poorest sectors of the population. The military operation known as "Ballena Azul" conducted by M-19 extracted and stole in a spectacular fashion a significant amount of ammunition and weapons from a military warehouse in a highly guarded army base.²⁵ Other examples are the hostage crisis in the Dominican Republic Embassy in Bogota with similar operations that helped maintain the revolutionary 'myth' of groups like M-19.

President Belisario Betancur Cuartas term witnessed a radical transformation of the ways in which the government dealt with internal security and the conflict. This period observed the birth of the peace negotiation process with rebel groups such as FARC and M-19. Special envoys and commissions were established to explore a possible peace settlement between the government and these groups, a situation that certainly created tensions and dislike from behalf of the military establishment.²⁶ At highest levels of decision making the organization of intelligence remained unchanged, the military remained autonomous in its management. However, the political decision to undergo a peace process concentrated most of the attention and resources into conflict resolution matters. It was only until the collapse of the process and the subsequent attack against the Ministry of Justice building by M-19 in 1985, that resulted in the death of the most prominent judges and legal advisors, that the government decided to intensify its military response and campaigns against the insurgency. This presidential term however observed interesting developments. Although many argued that the attack took the government completely by surprise both sides conducted campaigns against each other months before this operation. A proper assessment of the situation might have provided a warning of early signs that urban operations were the next and logical step of the confrontation between rebel and government forces.

The M-19 urban operations previous to the Justice Palace attack and the creation of "Batallon America" provided examples of how this group responded to the 'elimination

²⁵ Holman Morris, *Operacion Ballena Azul*, Intermedio Eds. Bogota, 2001

²⁶ Both sides, guerrilla and government, accused each other of manipulating the information about the 'real' issues surrounding the negotiations. The M-19 accused the government of disinformation about what was really going on the process. For them (M-19) offering peace as a salvation tool was just a distraction of the real intentions of the government. For this group the collapse of the talks revealed the true intentions of the government, the process did not aimed for a possible reconciliation and demobilization but more for the complete elimination of the rebel groups. According to the group's leadership the process was restrictive because it did not permitted a more diverse participation of other prominent political different from the traditional circle of influences supportive of the political establishment. Simultaneously the government conducted a silent war against the urban 'militias' of this group on several peace camps "Campamentos de Paz" established during the process and upon several political offices supporting M-19. See Carlos Pizarro Leon-Gomez. "Guerra a la Guerra". Edit. Tiempo Presente. Bogota, (1988)

plans' from the government. Combined and subsequent campaigns in cities like Cali where the M-19 tried and failed to accomplish the objective of generating a mobilization of the masses in the borders of major cities. Nevertheless, this period observed intense confrontations between guerrilla and government forces in which both parts realized the scope and limitation of their own capabilities. The guerrillas intensified efforts for appealing to the population through "milicias populares" campaigns. As a response, government forces conducted operations to interrupt these supportive networks.

The operation to take over the Justice Palace and the posterior military effort to recover control of the building provided invaluable lessons. The military retained complete operational and strategic control of the rescue operation while the government and the President himself, observed and followed the course of events with his cabinet members through radio news flashes and TV coverage. Testimonies and witness accounts at the time described that the government's single source of information during the crisis was provided by news flashes and media live coverage. Assessments of the situation in the ground remained restricted and unavailable to the President and his staff, operational detail and any intelligence resulting from the operation remained exclusively managed by the Armed Forces. Posterior investigations and hostages testimonies provided gruesome descriptions of the methods, confusion and tactical errors of the army in the rescue operation.²⁷ By the end of the Betancur term, narco-trafficking was already becoming an emerging threat. The extradition plans promoted by the government at that time took a toll in the life of Minister of Justice Rodrigo Lara Bonilla in 1984, when he was assassinated in Bogotá by a hired gun from the Medellín Cartel. Narco-terrorism became more prominent as a mean to exercise a terror war against the government and its citizens in order to push political influence and leverage upon the issue of extradition Colombian nationals to US jails.

When President Virgilio Barco Vargas was sworn into office the dynamics of the internal conflict presented alarming and dramatic changes. The levels of violence and the delicate internal security situation imposed an inter-institutional approach from behalf of the government to deal with the multiple manifestation of violence threatening the country. Narco-trafficking, paramilitary and insurgency groups demanded the full attention from the government in order to develop policies and presidential directives that could contribute to develop innovative strategies and plans to thwart them. Drug cartels and the means by which they waged a violent war against the Colombian government took a significant toll in the lives of influential political figures and innocent civilians.²⁸

²⁷ The episode remains as one of the most controversial of the country's recent history. Several investigations that followed the event resulted in the removal of officials involved in the operation. The rescue ended in a disaster, the building was burned and all the legal archives and records of processes and criminal investigations were lost – including early investigative records and files dealing with narcotics trafficking and corruption cases-. Several people and employees working at the building at that time were reported missing and counted for as casualties during the operation. Many of the reports were contested by relatives of the victims. Investigative authorities created cases based on testimonies and witness accounts that indicated that many of those reported dead managed to evacuate the building alive and later were taken into custody. Posterior investigation resulted in criminal prosecutions and trials in which the government was held accountable for the events and economic costs of the operation.

²⁸ The Barco Vargas presidential term observed a violent war waged between the government and the Medellín Cartel. The struggle became known in academic and political circles as the "President's War". Three presidential candidates were assassinated in this period, including Carlos Pizarro León Gomez former commander of M-19 who was running for presidential candidate. The Union Patriótica, UP, from

Narco-terrorism became the most common way by which drug cartels exercised their power and political leverage against the government. For defense and security planning matters the Armed Forces decided to lead the functions of Permanent Secretary of the Superior Council of National Defense by including the “Ayudantia General de las Fuerzas Armadas” as the main organ responsible for this type of roles. It became an early precedent of what years later will be known as the office of Presidential Advisory of Defense and Security with a civilian under control.

In 1989 law 814 created the Special Operations Component of the National Police known as “Cuerpo Elite” to respond against paramilitary groups, clandestine death squads and drug barons. At highest levels of government the Presidential Advisory for the Normalization, Rehabilitation and National Reconciliation (Consejeria Presidencial para la Normalizacion, Rehabilitacion y Reconciliacion Nacional) was also established with the main objective of centralizing decision -making and policies regarding peace negotiations and the inter-institutional means to attend social and help reconstitute institutional credibility and accountability. The advisory conducted successful programs of amnesty and negotiations with rebel groups that resulted in the demobilization and reintegration of combatants from various groups. This policy helped seven armed organizations in their negotiations with the government which main goal was to bring about the demobilization of their guerrillas. By the time that President Gaviria assumed office there were ongoing peace negotiations with at least seven groups.²⁹

In 1988 the government introduced law 180 for the defense and protection of democracy (Estatuto de Defensa de la Democacia). This law objective was to facilitate means and legitimate tools to confront guerrillas. Its content considered all the methods used by the insurgents and criminal groups as terrorism. By 1989 the drug Cartels where engaged in a declared war against the government and early signs of militarization of the drug war supported by the United States where already evident and visible. By the end of this term the country witnessed increased levels of autonomy of the military in the conduction of these affairs, including the management of intelligence at tactical and strategic levels. Pablo Escobar was already identified along with the rest of the Medellin Cartel leadership members as the number one threat against the Colombian state and its people. Most of the efforts to capture these individuals and organizations rested upon the National Police and DAS. Both organs were held accountable for the management of tactical authority and intelligence assessments of the pursuit and plans to capture the members of the cartel. They reported directly to the President about the elaboration, application of plans and operational results of many their actions. This happened most of the times in the absence of the Defense Minister of that time, who was not invited or attended most of these meetings.³⁰ The deaths of Presidential candidate Luis Carlos

the communist party suffered too with assassination campaigns against many of its members including their own presidential candidate Jaime Pardo Leal. The government issue various presidential decrees to attend this, most of the legislative and legal initiatives to seize properties of narcos and to difficult their daily operations.

²⁹ Marco Palacios. “La solucion politica al conflicto armado” in *Armaz la Paz es Desarmaz la Guerra*. IEPRI-FESCOL-CEREC- Giro Editores. Bogota (1999).

³⁰ Fears of infiltration and corruption of some identified members of the military forces whom were believed to be collaborating with the cartels made this situation worst. The Cartels identified both Police and DAS as the agencies directly involved in waging war against them. In fact, most of their terrorist attacks and decapitation campaigns were directed towards the heads and leadership of the Police and

Galan of the Liberal Party and of National Police Commander Valdemar Franklyn Quintero just accelerated the expedition of laws and presidential norms to attack the problem of crime and guerrilla mostly through legal tools and legislative measures.³¹

The government of President Cesar Gaviria must be remembered as one of the most active and significant in reforms and transformations related to national security planning. Matters directly influencing the use and management of strategic intelligence for the decision making process became one of the main areas of concern during this presidential term.³² Between 1991 and 1994 significant reforms were introduced within the Colombian defense and security architecture, most of them where conceived with the clear goals to strengthen civilian control and foster their participation in the elaboration and execution of national security matters. Rafael Pardo appointment as Minister of Defence was only a first step in a series of renovations in security and defense policy that this government introduced and followed. Rafael Pardo Rueda was president's Gaviria's former presidential advisor for security after he became the first civilian Minister of Defence in the country.

For intelligence management matters, President Gaviria and Defense Minister Pardo decided to lead the conduction and reform plans in those strategic intelligence matters that directly affected the areas of authority and the capabilities of the security services. One of the most significant results of the policies adopted during this period included the creation of the Presidential Advisory for National Defence and Security.³³ The advisory office also acted as the Executive secretary for the National Security Council, an organ established years before and which remained virtually inactive or neither used to its full potential for almost two decades.³⁴ These innovations were followed by the designation of another civilian in the direction of the Administrative Security Department (DAS) and the creation of the Unit for Security and Justice within the National Planning Department.³⁵ Most of these decisions were supported by a higher policy making commitment that contribute in the process of their application from the and which also called for an inter- institutional effort across the different agencies of the state considered vital to resolve the critical internal security situation. President Gaviria's defense and security policy consisted of two parts, but perhaps its second phase known as Security for the People (*Seguridad para la Gente*) established an important milestone in the whole process. The second phase of the strategy paid special attention to principles of inter-agency coordination, especially between the judiciary and the military branches of government.

Consequently, the Presidential Intelligence Committee was created under President Gaviria.³⁶ The committee was integrated by the vice- president; the ministers of interior;

DAS. Therefore, commenting any plans and operations concerning actions against them became difficult because of fears that they might be filtered at higher levels of decision-making.

³¹ Early signs of inter-institutional and inter-agency coordination were established through the creation of law 813 of 1989 that created a special advisory and coordination group for plans against death squads, "sicarios" and paramilitary groups. Other measures that followed included law 2269 of 1991 that established norms for the management of internal security " Normas para el Manejo del Orden Publico".

³² M. Wills, ' Las Políticas', p.135.

³³ The main objective of the Presidential Advisory for Defense and Security matters was to provide an articulate interpretation of the defense and security policy of the President and transform them into specific plans and measures that later would become legal initiatives and presidential directives.

³⁴ 'President Gaviria presents his government agenda ' , *El Tiempo*, August 8th 1990, p. 6-A.

³⁵ Presidential Decree 2167, 1992.

³⁶ E. Pizarro, ' Colombia', p. 135.

foreign affairs and defense; the commander for the Armed Forces; the directors of the National Police and the Administrative Security Department (D.A.S); the General Attorney; the Prosecutor office and the Presidential advisor for National Defense and Security. Its principal functions included '... the elaboration of strategic intelligence plans, the definition of international co-operation guidelines related with the matter, and the establishment of evaluation criteria in the assessment of its results...'³⁷ During formal meetings the members of the committee received and analysed the information coming from each one of the state organs involved in intelligence related activities (D.A.S, the Armed Forces and the National Police). According to a source working in the Presidential Advisory for National Defense and Security at that time, the intelligence committee established an important precedent for security matters at the decision-making process level.

*'... by that time, the concept of intelligence for the decision making process did not existed and was something completely new ... the intelligence briefs that traditionally were delivered by the D.A.S to the President's office, were just a compilation of short or 'mini' reports dealing with operative matters and additional miscellaneous information which did not have either, any coherence or value on its content ... the committee meetings- [under president Gaviria]- determined a list of priorities that established a producer- consumer interface in which the government transmitted its own needs towards its intelligence agencies ...'*³⁸

Another important part of these so-called 'intelligence revolution' plans were President's Gaviria military reform component. They revealed the government's interest and concern for the improvement of the state's intelligence organs and capabilities as vital components for the maintenance of internal security.³⁹ The reform plans included a reorganization of the human intelligence networks plans to be conducted by the Ministry of Defense under recommendations and guidance of advisors of the U.S Military Forces.⁴⁰ These objectives included the consolidation of Mobile Brigades and the allocation of resources to increase the Armed Forces intelligence capabilities to fight insurgency.⁴¹ As a result, the reform plans of 1992 established the Intelligence arm within the organizational structure of the Colombian Armed Forces. However and despite of the time and effort involved, this intelligence reform faced some irregularities that undermined its real potential. This situation and problems became even more evident when it was discovered that some military commanders and brigades were using civilians in their human intelligence networks. Most of these civilians turned out to be members of paramilitary groups involved in clandestine military intelligence activities according to government investigations and reports from human rights organizations.⁴²

Although, it became perhaps one of the most active governments in the management and use of intelligence for internal security matters, Gaviria's intelligence policy

³⁷ *El Tiempo*, 13th of December 1991, p. 5 - A.

³⁸ Note: this source requested confidentiality. Personal Interview. July, 2000.

³⁹ Francisco Leal, 'Defensa y Seguridad', p.165.

⁴⁰ Equipo NIZKOR, *Organization and Operation of Intelligence Networks*, <http://www.equiponizkor.intell.net.html>, downloaded 19th of June 2000.

⁴¹ Colombian Armed Forces Directive No. 200-05/91. National Defense Ministry. Military Forces of Colombia. Command Headquarters. Order. No. 200-05/91.p.1.

⁴² Human Rights Watch, 'Chapter III: The Intelligence Reorganization', *Colombia's Killer Networks: The Military - Paramilitary Partnership and the United States*, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1996>, File downloaded 26th July 2000.

evidenced also antecedents that affected and undermined to a certain level its potential for becoming a solid reference for future developments in the matter. The creation of both, the Presidential Advisory for National Defence and Security and the Presidential Intelligence Committee until today remain important and significant antecedents in the use of intelligence for policy making. Nevertheless, this presidential term also observed critical set backs that tested the level of accountability and effectiveness of the system. The events regarding the escape of Medellin's Cartel leader Pablo Escobar from the security prison named La Catedral in 1993 deserve close attention.

It was mentioned before that most crisis either could invigorate a decision maker's support for intelligence, or the contrary, reveal apathy towards them. Escobar's escape from La Catedral prison for example tested the recent intelligence structure created under Cesar Gaviria's government. The negotiations and details that ended with Escobar's detention and incarceration will not be discussed. However, the events and assessments that led to the decision to transfer Pablo Escobar to another prison resulted in scandal and the escape of the capo and his closest and most violent associates. The episode exemplified and revealed critical vulnerabilities inside the system, most of them associated with problems of coordination within intelligence agencies, excessive compartmentalization of information and evident absence of adequate assessment and crisis response capabilities at the highest levels of decision-making.

At operational levels the procedure to execute the transfer orders lacked of precision and were not supported by an adequate coordination framework for the parties involved. However, its most evident vulnerability was that these plans lacked of the advantage provided through stealth and surprise.⁴³ The information that influenced the government's decision to transfer into another prison came from various sources and was supported mostly on evidence and reports about Escobar's uninterrupted illegal activities and crimes co-ordinated inside this prison.⁴⁴ The most important organ addressing these strategically a delicate matters, the National Security Council, remained for too long involved in discussions about the legal aspects and related details directly affecting the decision to move Escobar into another facility. There was an evident preference to study and assess the legal ramifications of the problem instead of an analysis of possible scenarios that could provide a list of options and responses available from Escobar's side of the equation.

The government came with at least three different sets of decisions and plans to address the problem. This was aggravated even further by the fact that the high level officials

⁴³ The strategic location of the prison on top of hill allowed Escobar to have key observing posts and critical points that could warn him of any vehicles or planes coming near the prison. He established paid networks of informants outside the Army bases and surrounding areas of the prison that warned him of any 'un-usual' activities or troops movements. The Police was not allowed near the prison, instead the Army and guards selected by Escobar himself conducted surveillance and security of the building. The Police and Army used helicopters that could be heard coming from miles before they landed. Escobar learned to avoid and detect the Army's and Police operational and transportation procedures. His years of war against DAS and the Police provided him tactical and strategic knowledge of the mind-set of those commanders and officials conducting operations against him. The Armed Forces routine in procedures summed to the ways in which they conduct operations became the most important source of tactical intelligence for Escobar.

⁴⁴ International intelligence agencies like DEA and CIA presented evidence, documents and communication intercepts to the Colombian government that confirmed what many have feared from the beginning. The continuation of "business as usual" by Escobar and his associates inside the luxurious la Catedral jail.

and commanders involved in them were not informed and did not talk to each other in order to 'maintain' secrecy and to avoid a possible leak of information, most of them justified because of fears of infiltration. As a result the main players involved (government's negotiators Vice- Minister of Justice Mendoza and Hernando Navas) and Army General Pardo Ariza (following orders of the Joint Chiefs and the Minister of Defense) arrived at the site of the prison with conflicting and different set of orders. Mendoza was commissioned to negotiate a transfer of Escobar to a military base while Army General Pardo Ariza orders were to take control and occupy the prison site. Under these circumstances Escobar reacted by holding Mendoza and Navas as hostages overnight while the government tried to negotiate a deal under the worst conditions. In the meantime, general Pardo Ariza remained confused about the situation and decided to storm into the prison almost 12 hours after his orders were given and with Escobar already gone from the site.⁴⁵

At higher decision-making levels the Catedral fiasco unveiled acute problems of coordination within the key players involved in the National Security Council. Surprisingly it was not a lack of information that impeded a precise action. Fears of infiltration at higher levels created a scenario in which the information was compartmentalised and not shared across the different agencies and authorities involved. Colombian National Police was excluded of the process and was not properly included in the discussion of matters directly associated with the Catedral Prison security detail. Pablo Escobar himself requested it since he considered the Police its main enemy and most dangerous threat.

Despite of the critical conditions surrounding the transfer of Escobar, President's Gaviria was scheduled to attend an official visit to Spain during that same day. The decision of not changing these travel plans remained unaltered until the last minute. The decision to keep the visit in the agenda were mostly supported by statements and opinions provided by the military commanders whom vehemently expressed to the commander in chief that they could execute his orders without any problem. Simultaneously and throughout the development of these events the government continued with the assessment of the legal details of the operation, as a result it was decided to propose the vice-minister of justice as a spokesman and legitimate negotiator to resolve the crisis. The decision-making process of the Security Council sessions assessing this particular situation exemplified an inter-institutional effort in full action: legal perspectives and analysis were presented by the General Attorney himself. The military provided the operational details and tactical details of the operation. The president's closest advisors, including national security, proposed the idea of sending a high ranking representative to negotiate with Escobar. At this point everything seemed to be on place and with no visible contradictions, the main objective was to avoid an eventual escape of Escobar and to take control of the prison. However, other set of probabilities or alternate scenarios remained unattended and which afterwards proved to be the execution of the main task. After all, many within government and the military believed that the situation on their hands was just a simple operation to retake control of a prison.

⁴⁵ For a detail account of these events see Luis Cañón M. , *El Patrón: Vida y Muerte de Pablo Escobar*. (Planeta Eds. Bogotá, 1994) and Mark Bowden, *Killing Pablo. The Hunt for the World's Greatest Outlaw*. (New York, Atlantic Monthly Press, 2001)

Unfortunately by the time the orders were executed many of those “intangibles” factors became more evident and revealed at least four serious miscalculations. First, Escobar’s possible reaction to the orders followed by the government did not considered alternate plans or procedures when it came the time to manage a traditional scenario of crisis management. The intelligence agencies including the intelligence components of the Armed Forces and National Police possessed relevant information, and perhaps most important, individuals among their ranks with first hand knowledge of Escobar mindset and personality. Escobar was underestimated on his intentions and capability to exercise power and influence in almost every single detail related to the security of the prison and the area near the site. This was undermined by excessive secrecy in the plans to execute the transfer orders that resulted in the analysis of bits and pieces of information during the whole process.

Second, the system itself and the National Security Council machinery revealed a most evident weakness: adequate counter-intelligence capabilities. A more encompassing and strategic vision of this requirement could have provided a better understanding of the principles and rules of secrecy and operational security. It could have also contributed in the exchange and flow of information across the agencies by improving the levels of confidence and trust between the different agencies and forces. Third, the lack of coordination throughout the various levels of decision-making not only revealed a problem of mistrust across the agencies and intelligence components. It also demonstrated problems typical of a structure that was just recently created and which was not completely consolidated and tested. Fourth, the decision of not altering the travel plans of the President to Spain revealed not only that he did not counted with an adequate information system to assess all the details and possible outcomes of this delicate situation. As a result crisis management training at the highest levels of national security affairs became a main source of concern after the events of the Cathedral prison.

The escape and its subsequent crisis also precipitated significant alterations within the procedures and functions established months before during the regular meetings of the Presidential Intelligence Committee. According to sources working at that time in government, Pablo Escobar escape from prison generated a situation in which all other intelligence efforts that were not directly relevant to support the re-capture of Escobar were put aside or either postponed to concentrate all the available resources in the consecution of this objective.⁴⁶ The regular cycle of meetings within this committee were postponed and interrupted, and the President himself decided to take direct control of the problem with his minister of defence. In a certain way, this might have seemed to be the most adequate and logic response to the situation. Nevertheless, it must be said that the government reaction towards the crisis responded to a traditional response most common to policy makers: the demand of immediate attention towards matters affecting they're own agenda. The most evident flaw resulted in the interruption and continuity of the available tools and mechanism for improving and formalising the use of intelligence at top levels interrupted other plans in intelligence.

It must me mentioned however, that the interruption of those efforts prove to be effective in a certain way. Months later the Medellin Cartel leader was killed by the Colombian authorities and the government recovered some of its credibility despite of the negative political context and outcomes that surrounded his escape. .⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Note: the source requested not to reveal its name. Personal Interview, London, June 2000.

⁴⁷ G. Garcia Marquez, *News From a Kidnapping*, (London: Pinguin Books , 1994).

Nevertheless, it also revealed that any attempt to consolidate an adequate organizational structure for dealing with intelligence at top levels was not strong enough to either, stand by itself or struggle for its own institutional survival. According to a source working in President's Gaviria staff at that time.

*'... intelligence matters are not a only a question of juridical formality, laws or presidential directives, they depend more on the use and style that the President himself consider they should have ...'*⁴⁸

The next sections would describe the main features and dimensions of the use of intelligence within decision making in the Colombian case. For this purpose it would be divided into two complementary sections. The first one would provide a general and brief description of the main features concerning policy and decision making in Colombia. Thus, it would centre its attention at the highest levels of government describing initially those elements intervening in the formulation of internal security policy. This would be followed by a general discussion of the existing instruments of government for the management of intelligence and national security matters.

Intelligence, policy and decision-making.

Most of the academic debate analyzing the relationship between intelligence, policy and decision-making has concentrated in its study within the British and American intelligence systems. Both, the British and American models have proven to be useful references from which other intelligence communities learned and adopted their own systems.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, for the purpose of this paper both western and non-western views could not be considered in an isolated manner. They need to be understood and analyzed in the context that important amount of doctrinal thinking resulted from close interaction between them.

For example, gathering and using intelligence- according to T.L Hughes- has become an essential part of what is now expected of modern government's adherence in other matters.⁵⁰ In both British and American traditions, the introduction and use of intelligence -in the form of estimates for example - has been adapted to the collection and analysis of information relevant to government's decision-making processes. The fact of incorporating these features into the decision-making process -according to M. Herman -entails some government commitment to rationality and concern for reality. However, the main characteristics and dynamics within it still remains a matter of discussion and study.

For the case under consideration this also has proved to be useful. It could be said that the Colombian intelligence structure combines some incomplete features and components present in the two systems mentioned above. The lack of continuity at institutional levels of government dealing directly with the management of privileged information has not contributed to the situation. There is still an unattended necessity to

⁴⁸ Note: this source requested not to mention its name. Personal Interview. June 2000.

⁴⁹ M. Herman, 'Top Level Assessments', *Intelligence Power in Peace and War*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, (Cambridge: University Press, 1996),pp. 265-266.

⁵⁰ T.L. Hughes, *The Fate of Facts in the World of Men - Foreign Policy and Intelligence Making*, The Foreign Policy Association Headline Series, New York, No. 233, December 1976, p.22.

have a profound strategic thinking and institutional debate of this particular matter. For instance, the internal and complex dynamics of the security situation in the country have determined an immediate attention and preference for tactical and operational intelligence over a comprehensive discussion of long-term objectives for strategic intelligence requirements. This is an unfortunate trend aggravated even further by the combination of a limited strategic vision and incoherent guidelines for the management of intelligence matters at the highest levels of government. However, this does not mean that the problem has been completely ignored, but its importance and debate has varied in different degrees of attention throughout several presidential terms.

Strategic thinking documents reflecting thoughtful research of intelligence requirements at the highest levels of government are not common and should be more available. The majority of documents reflecting discussions about these matters have remained for too long at tactical levels. An example is that as a result of this emphasis at tactical levels many have forgotten that within this kind of conflicts there is a hidden or secret war for struggle of power which main objective is to secure control of territory and population by carrying out actions and plans to dominate important economic sources and other assets that don't necessary fall into the traditional military realm. Colombian guerrillas and other illegal groups are aware of this and they take advantage by demonstrating that the government has not been consistent or clear in its overall political objectives and instruments to attend this vulnerability.

For example, in 1984 the Colombian Army decided to specialize an operational component of its force in intelligence matters, ten years after in 1991 the intelligence arm of the armed forces was officially established. Furthermore, the most common and referred book dealing with intelligence matters in Colombia is a manual of tactical intelligence for combat operations known as the MIC (Manual de Inteligencia de Combate) that was written during the 1960's at the Escuela de Inteligencia Charry Solano and still is distributed among members of the community with yearly updates.⁵¹ From this tactical and military intelligence manual other agencies involved in the collection and assessment of strategic information for the state learn and apply principles of intelligence management. Moreover, a tradition has been established that the majority of the intelligence used to wage war against the guerrillas and illegal groups has been formulated in almost a virtual absence of strategic guidelines or clear policies from behalf of the decision makers at highest levels.

Unfortunately in the Colombian system the most influential and decisive player in these matters, the President, has neglected adequate attention in listing his requirements for strategic intelligence. Moreover, the weak leadership that civilians had exercised while serving in duties dealing directly with defense and security matters has not contributed to resolve this situation. Quite frequently the president and his staff of national security advisors found themselves in situations in which the information they are assessing and they ways it is being collected and delivered is manipulated or originates from a single source. Is not uncommon that the advisors dealing with such delicate matters use inaccurate assessments of the capabilities and intentions of the adversary. This situation not only limits the impact of the adequate use of timely and effective intelligence, but

⁵¹ This is a tactical manual up-dated every two years, from its contents nearly 15,000 operatives distributed throughout 11 intelligence organizations read guidelines and apply lessons learned. However it could be said that was one of the products that resulted from important US Army military training teams visiting and advising the Colombian government in early counterinsurgency efforts in the early 1960's.

also affects the ways to measure the levels of success of those plans involving the use of specific military capabilities and force necessary to undermine the strength and influence of illegal groups.⁵²

Recent efforts to create a more systematic arrangement of the components and products responsible for delivering and managing intelligence at strategic levels include the National Intelligence Council during Ernesto Samper's presidential term. The SINAI (Sistema Nacional de Inteligencia) was established in 1995 and formalized by presidential decree No. 2233 in 1996. This norm was a significant development in defining which were the components of the different agencies of the Colombian intelligence community. It established the guidelines of a system for intelligence at national levels (Sistema Nacional de Inteligencia) including a national technical council of intelligence (Consejo Tecnico Nacional de Inteligencia) as the main organ directing the efforts from the system.⁵³ The council main function included the elaboration and presentation of permanent reports about findings and plans dealing with intelligence matters for the National Defense and Security Council (Consejo Superior de Seguridad y Defensa Nacional). Both the SINAI and the technical council for intelligence shared a list of responsibilities and duties that demonstrated a concern for integrating in a more comprehensive and inclusive way the different sources of information within a system tasked to deal and plan with vital strategic matters. Unfortunately this effort was short-lived and was not continued, neither the SINAI nor the council meet more than a few times during this presidential term and it never transcended its planning stage towards a direction that could have made it more operational. Nevertheless, efforts and other important operations conducted by individual security agencies -some times jointly across armed services- occurred during this period, specially in the law enforcement and criminal area.

It could be said that several factors affected its implementation, for instance its organization and set-up was considered by many observers almost impeccable and an important improvement in this matters. However, the management of the whole system was being conducted from the minister of interior affairs office and not by the president himself. In other words, the main consumer and head of the system was replaced by a cabinet level figure that at that time was simultaneously defending the President in an impeachment trial investigating illegal contributions made by the Cali cartel during the election campaign.⁵⁴ This situation, summed to others related to the same investigation precipitated a deep problem of mistrust towards the role of the intelligence services and the ways that they could influence and affect the decision making process at the highest

⁵² It seems that different agencies of the government collect information that could be essential for the production of plans against illegal groups. Recently there has been some interesting improvements in the ways in which this information is being collected and used for strategic purposes, however there is still a tendency to manage this information in an isolated manner and with no clear guidelines or evidence of an adequate inter-agency coordination.

⁵³ The SINAI consisted of all the governmental agencies that were authorised by law for the planning and execution of intelligence functions and plans. The Consejo Tecnico Nacional de Inteligencia was the main component directing the national intelligence machinery component.

⁵⁴ Other reasons included: lack of political interest form behalf of the president in consolidating such effort; acute problems of inter-agency rivalry; the fact that the law that created the system was not a product of an open debate among the other intelligence agencies of the system or of a specialized forum; a not so clear definition of what was the difference roles and jurisdiction of those decision makers committed in defense or intelligence matters; a problem of conflict of interests surfaced among those decision makers that acted directly in matters of policy making and intelligence at the same time.

levels of government.⁵⁵ It also constitutes an example of delegation of authority in crucial and vital matters dealing directly with the planning and execution of security and defense policy.

It also unveiled an structural problem, there is too much information available throughout different agencies of the government that can contribute immensely to intelligence assessments; the main challenge is to sort-out ways to organize in a coherent manner the pieces of this bureaucratic puzzle and find effective policies to systematically coordinate actions and encourage cooperation between them. This aspect entails operational areas of interest concerning the proper management and coordination of the different information sources feeding the intelligence system that unfortunately, have not been attended effectively. For example, the traditional management of human intelligence networks in Colombia has not been coordinated or sustained because it is not the result of a systemic exercise that harness together such capabilities with a robust analytical assessment to support them. As a result you have a loosely coupled system which gathers important amounts of information through several means of collection but that still lacks adequate processing features that will enable it to deliver thoughtful and 'actionable' strategic analysis to support them.

Current efforts of president Alvaro Uribe government in this matters mark a most recent departure point in this matter with the establishment of the cooperation networks "redes de cooperantes" program and the information reward system, proved to be most effective during the drug cartels wars years. However important operational security concerns still remain such as the type of management and procedures required for the integrity of the information delivered by these "cooperantes" networks along with the adequate counter-intelligence capabilities necessary to protect the whole system.⁵⁶

The personality, perceptions and leadership of decision makers are also influential factors to be considered. Commentators like C. Andrew believe that the intelligence community and the form in which it is organized remain heavily influenced by both the policies and personality of the presidents directing them.⁵⁷ For instance, President Ernesto Samper dedication to matters dealing with intelligence was practically non-existent; he preferred to delegate such issues to close advisors or ministers.⁵⁸ On 1997

⁵⁵ This investigation became also known as the "*proceso ochomil*" and precipitated several criminal investigations of prominent political figures close to the presidential campaign financing committee. The investigation started in 1995 and was surrounded by scandal, corruption, murder and arrests; at the same time the government initiated a manhunt for the Cali Cartel that resulted in the capture of its main leaders. The misuse of the intelligence services in this period was most prominent and became public when several tapes of conversations between recognised political figures close to the government, including the President himself, surfaced in the media and the press.

⁵⁶ The demobilization of combatants program, currently conducted jointly between the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense, has identified this problem and has requested support for the purchase of polygraphs to assess the data given by the individuals within the program.

⁵⁷ C. Andrew, 'The Producer / User Interface. American Presidents and their Intelligence Communities', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (London: Frank Cass, October 1995), pp. 95 - 111.

⁵⁸ These kind of topics were avoided by president Samper because of personal dislike, it is well known that Horacio Serpa Uribe, then Minister of Interior, attended and acted in representation of the President in meetings dealing with intelligence or confidential affairs. Evidence of this is that the organization of the national intelligence system SINAI was directed mostly from the ministry of interior affairs office. Most ironically this government continued the tradition of keeping a national security advisory attached to the President's office. However, it remained unattended and with no official replacement for the rest of Samper's presidential term after its National Security Advisor resigned to this position after completing only a year in this assignment.

the fourth defense minister of that period Gilberto Echeverri Mejia proposed the creation of the National Peace Council (Consejo Nacional de Paz) to consolidate the peace negotiation agenda and to boost civilian participation in this process. President Samper was included and participated actively in this council. The political decision-making process that resulted in this effort is another example of a common and historic tradition of governments throughout the history of the last two decades in Colombia that inaccurately defend the idea that peace negotiations with rebel groups stand as a legitimate and more viable substitute for effective armed action against them.⁵⁹ Advocates of this posture believe that the negotiation option stands as a valid replacement for more solid and robust policies related to the formulation of strategy at the highest levels of government necessary to activate a national mobilization effort against these illegal armed groups.

Any organizational strategy and plans to improve the collection and analysis of intelligence can only be determined by the executive, as it is argued by R. Betts.⁶⁰ As a result, the interface between the producer and consumer of intelligence turns out to be a highly personalized process. The use of peace negotiations between the government and the guerrilla groups has been a political option that runs parallel to this country internal security policy.⁶¹ The Colombian peace effort have permanently interacted for years with the decision making process.⁶² The main reasons that supported its implementation as a political option during the Presidency of Belisario Betancur in 1982, unveiled the obvious consequences of fatigue resulting from the intense prolongation of the internal conflict.⁶³ Unfortunately, peace negotiations have proven to be an opportunity that the Colombian insurgencies have exploited to obtain both, political space and military momentum. This element can still be evidenced throughout the developments of the peace agenda negotiations that occurred during the Andres Pastrana government and other peace process elsewhere.⁶⁴

In the other hand the conservative government of Andres Pastrana committed significant resources and political efforts in the promotion of ideas and initiatives aimed to introduce most needed reforms on intelligence matters, especially in its military

⁵⁹ Throughout the years of conflict different governments have established the peace negotiation tool as a political option conducted from the Executive office in consultation with representatives of the civil society and members of the Presidential cabinet. Nevertheless, it has proved to be a prolonged, interrupted and controversial process considering its political outcomes and antecedents. It has remained as the commanding political option for almost two decades throughout different governments and it has conquered a privileged position in the formulation of the national security affairs agenda in relation with the handling of the insurgency problem. However, this effort must be understood in a wider scope. It makes part of institutional distribution of organs involved in the planning and formulation of policies concerning national security and defence issues. It must be noted that for many years the planning and production of initiatives related with this matters remained under the control and direction of the Armed Forces. The government civilian participation on this matter remained low and distant for many years at least, until the reforms introduced by the Cesar Gaviria's government in 1991.

⁶⁰ R. Betts, 'American Strategic Intelligence: Politics, Priorities, and Direction', *Intelligence Policy and National Security*, R. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. (comp.) (London: MacMillan, 1981) p. 246.

⁶¹ Rafael Pardo, "The Prospects for Peace in Colombia: Lessons From Recent Experience" *Working Paper- Inter-American Dialogue*. July, 2002.

⁶² Maria Emma Wills, 'Las Políticas Gubernamentales Frente al Proceso de Paz: Entre el Peso del Pásado y un Futuro Incierto', in E. Ungar (comp.) , *Gobernabilidad en Colombia*, (Bogota: TM eds, 1993), p. 131.

⁶³ Alvaro Camacho, *La Colombia de Hoy*, (Bogota: U. Del Valle, 1986), pp. 43-70.

⁶⁴ Francisco Leal, ' Defensa y Seguridad Nacional en Colombia', *Orden Mundial y Seguridad: Nuevos Desafios para Colombia y America Latina'*, (Bogota: TM eds.1994) p. 154.

dimension. President Pastrana valued the use of intelligence but changed the nature and emphasis within its own decision making process according to government sources working at that time.⁶⁵ Intelligence management during this period did not continued in the same direction of past administrations.

There are least two particular and visible explanations to support this appreciation. First, the intelligence model previously implemented during the Gaviria period - the most accepted at that time-was specifically designed to respond simultaneously to two threats that received an undifferentiated political and military response from the government at that time: drug organizations and insurgency. This model applied became known as 'integral war' against drug cartels -specially against the Medellin Cartel- and the insurgent organizations.⁶⁶ Nowadays, the Medellin and Cali Cartels have been dismantled which necessarily do not mean that the drug problem have disappeared completely from the list of threats considered inside Colombia's internal security realm. On the contrary, this is far of becoming a reality at the least in the medium or probably in the long term. However, the SINAI and the Technical Council on Intelligence (Consejo Tecnico de Inteligencia) initiatives established during the term of his most immediate predecessor, President Samper, were neither continued on Pastrana's national security and defense plans. Instead this government preferred to consolidate and strengthen the military intelligence component of the Armed Forces, especially through the assistance and military resources provided by Plan Colombia.

Second, this presidential term established a set of political objectives at domestic and international levels that were different to those implemented previously by his predecessors. However, there was an important antecedent that this government needed to attend and overcome: the serious operational set backs and mistakes committed by the Armed Forces – especially the Army- throughout the duration of Samper presidential period.⁶⁷ This heritage uncovered deep and evident inefficiencies in the management and use of intelligence at tactical levels. As a result, these weakness and mistakes of the military were exploited cleverly by the guerrilla organizations in order to invigorate their activities, consolidate territorial presence in ungoverned areas and undermine the actions of the military forces. Therefore, this government identified the immediate necessity of correcting the mistakes done at operational levels during the poor performance of the military forces between 1996 through 1998.

As a result a project emerged from the new leadership of the military forces at that time. Its main goal was to strengthen the intelligence component within a wider strategy to reform and modernize the military forces. This took place between 1998- 2001 and it paid significant attention to the acquisition and improvement of the technical means to assess real time intelligence during combat situations. These plans included and identified military intelligence as key factor to regain the strategic advantage in the conflict. It also initiated the integration of a high mobility intelligence system supported by aerial platforms and the creation of an information system to classify intelligence within the Intelligence Central of the Armed Forces (Central de Inteligencia de las Fuerzas Armadas). In other words, the main objective was to introduce significant reform into the Armed Forces to strengthen their modernization and actualisation in

⁶⁵ Ambassador Luis Alberto Moreno. Colombian Ambassador to the White House in Washington D.C. Personal Interview. Washington D.C. July, 2000.

⁶⁶ I. Orozco, 'La guerra', (1989).

⁶⁷ D. Spencer: ' Bogota Continues', p.9.

those military intelligence components considered essential to neutralize the threats challenging the security and stability of the state.⁶⁸ A clear example of the results obtained by the implementation of such capabilities was the creation of Joint Intelligence Center in Tres Esquinas. This military compound at the south of the country became the most important center for military intelligence gathering for counter-narcotics and insurgency campaigns and the nodal point of contact for US intelligence sharing.⁶⁹

At first sight, it seemed that the mission was clear: to implement a drastic improvement in the collection, evaluation, and dissemination of usable operational intelligence to be integrated afterwards inside more mobile and rapid deployment capabilities. However, many believed that these plans remained insufficient and limited because of the strong emphasis that the government placed only into the military intelligence components. These plans decided to overlook other policies that could had help develop other capacities capable of providing decision makers with the best available knowledge about the plans and strategies from the illegal groups threatening the stability of the state. Once more, in tactical and operational levels Colombia has an impressive record of both resources mobilized and officials executing successful plans most of them in the law enforcement and fight against crime dimensions.⁷⁰

The traditional model of attacking these groups infrastructure and financial networks proved to be most effective during the wars against drug cartels, however it is known that the existing intelligence system has failed to attack in an effective fashion the support structure of the other illegal groups. The strategy of concentrating most of the resources in attacking narco-trafficking as the single and most important source feeding this groups war systems can create partial results. Particularly since most of these groups have alternative sources of financing and revenue collection not directly associated with the drug business.

Another and more recent example that demonstrates how the intelligence and user and consumer process is a personalized process is president Alvaro Uribe Velez personal involvement in the conduction and follow-up of military operations to contest and recover control of territory held by FARC and other illegal groups. Several reports from the media have documented that president Uribe's leadership and own personal style has not been timid in the handling and management of defense and security matters. On topics dealing with intelligence and strategic information requirements the President is known for his informal requests for tactical details and real-time situation assessments of specific operations. Even further in operational details such as the recent and tragic rescue of Antioquia's governor Guillermo Gaviria and former minister of defense

⁶⁸ Comando General, Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, *Fuerzas Militares de Cara al Siglo XXI. Reestructuración de las Fuerzas Militares (1998-2001)*. Bogota, 1999.

⁶⁹ The base became known as the "war's brain", within it real time intelligence sharing by the United States occurred with information and data provided from radar, listening stations and aerial platforms conducting communication intercepts.

⁷⁰ Colombian National Police participation in major international operations to disrupt narcotics traffickers networks include the hunt of Pablo Escobar and the Cali cartel in the late 1990's, Operación Milenio in 1999 that included at least 250 Colombian police and judicial agents supported by DEA and other US federal agencies; Operation Rosario against the heart of Buenaventura Cartel in 1999 and most recently Colombian Army Operación Gato Negro in Guainia in 2001 that captured druglord Fernando Beira Mar and the joint operation which led to the capture of three provisional IRA men training FARC guerrillas in 2001.

Gilberto Echeverri, both held captive and later assassinated by FARC during the operation.⁷¹

Major terrorist campaigns led by FARC in notable places as the Nugal Club in Bogota and in other smaller cities like Neiva and Arauca have demonstrated the necessity of an adequate coordination of intelligence agencies involved in the planning and prevention against this attacks. Uribe's has recognized the importance of consolidating more coordination and collaboration between the intelligence agencies in disregard of rivalries that could exist among them. He has also publicly demanded better results or the option of presenting a formal petition of resignation to flag officers unable to guarantee security and the protection of the population living in areas under their jurisdiction.⁷² As a result permanent tensions between the civilian leadership and the military exist at the ministry of defense level, these are aggravated even further by the absence and delay of almost a year, of the official public policy document which outlined the criteria for the coordination of intelligence matters at strategic and national levels.

This aspect has been identified and addressed recently in the defense policy document recently published on August 2003. President Alvaro Uribe Democratic Security policy recognizes six courses of action in order to achieve its main strategic objectives.⁷³ The co-ordination of the State action is being implemented and led by the Ministry of Defense, particularly of the actions that involve the Armed Forces and National Police with other ministries and State institutions. The Joint Intelligence Committee, created through this new national security strategy, will co-ordinate strategic intelligence management and will also act as the main consultancy body or entity responsible of promoting this coordination and presenting studies and assessments to the National Security Council. The National Security and Defense Council, led by President Uribe, include specific duties and it has been tasked to evaluate and make the necessary recommendations to improve and invigorate the policies related to intelligence matters. This council will be the entity who will centralize the different intelligence activities throughout the different agencies of the government in order to guarantee that they accommodate to the objectives established in the security and defense policy.

⁷¹ During the campaign against the Medellin Cartel, president Cesar Gaviria Trujillo conducted an unsuccessful military operation to rescue journalist Diana Turbay, daughter of ex-president Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala. Turbay was kidnapped by Pablo Escobar and was part of a group of prominent political figures held captive by the drug lord. Rescue operations in Colombia have a good record in Colombia, taking into account that it is one of the countries with the highest indexes of kidnapping in the region, and that the government has created special GAULA units within the Police and Army that conduct permanently rescue and anti-kidnapping operations. However the level of uncertainty and other external factors make this type of operations extremely dangerous in terms of the possible outcome. See "Responsables del rescate del gobernador de Antioquia y del ex-ministro de defensa relatan detalles de la operaci3n" *El Tiempo*, Mayo 11, 2003.

⁷² "Tarjeta Amarilla: la relacion del Presidente con los generales esta en su punto mas ajo. Rodaran cabezas" in *Revista Cambio.com*, August, 20, 2003. Downloaded on August 25-2003, <http://www.revistacambio.com/html/portada/articulos/1378/>

⁷³ The Democratic Security document set out a series of strategic objectives that must be met: 1) Consolidation of State Control throughout Colombia 2) Protection of the Population 3) Elimination of the Illegal Drugs Trade in Colombia 4) Maintenance of a Deterrent Capability and 6) Transparency, Efficiency and Accountability. There are also six course of actions that complement this objectives: Co-ordinate action of the State, Strengthening State Institutions, Consolidating Control of National Territory, Protecting the Rights of All Colombians, Cooperating for the Security of All and Communicating State policy. See Ministry of Defense, *Democratic Security- Summary*. Republic of Colombia, August 2003. Pp. 7.

The Joint Intelligence Committee Machinery set-up demonstrates some concern for those lessons learned on past administrations related to the organizational details required for these matters. The committee recognizes the benefits of an integrated and coordinated action of the different agencies of the State that could provide and deliver to it the best available knowledge for the decision-making process of issues dealing with security and defense matters. The joint architecture for intelligence was preferred over a centralization model considering that its nature will promote and facilitate important inter-institutional efforts across the different agencies participating in these matters. A preference for horizontal and more flat structures in the agencies could attend more efficiently the type of asymmetrical threats challenging the security and well being of the State and its citizens. However its formalization and full implementation as the coordinating entity in these matters has not been completely accomplished. Mostly because of continuing problems of coordination within the intelligence services, rivalry between agencies and conflicting and duplicity of roles of some agencies like DAS who continue to fight for a more prominent and far reaching role and influence in the management of intelligence matters at strategic levels.

Nevertheless, important means that also proved to be effective to the decision-making process of intelligence matters at strategic levels of government, such as the presidential office of the National Security Advisor, has not been continued in this term. In this sense the Uribe administration has opted to centralize the management of intelligence matters at strategic levels via the National Security and Defense Council, its Joint Intelligence Committee and the Ministry of Defense. The functions of liaison (enlace) that the national security advisory office held in the past could have proven to be even a better complement of the actual intelligence machinery and organizational set-up. However and as mentioned before, President's Uribe particular and personal management style of these matters could have duplicate these functions at the highest levels of decision making of this government.

Some of the early and most recent results credited to the new system have been evidenced in the improvement of inter-agency efforts occurring across the Armed Forces, DAS and the Fiscalía which have resulted in significant operations against the infrastructure and finance networks of illegal groups. Of significant importance has been the new unit created within the Ministry of Economy, the UIAF (Unidad de Analisis Financiero) and the Ministry of Defense Program of Humanitarian Attention to Demobilized Combatants (Programa de Atencion Humanitaria al Desmovilizado – PAHD) launched on February 2003.⁷⁴ This program has also been coordinated jointly with the Ministry of the Interior office and provides a good example of inter-institutional mechanism from different agencies from the State attending this problem. Also international cooperation and training provided by the foreign nations with significant experience in these matters is currently occurring within the Ministry of

⁷⁴ The PAHD program under the direct coordination of the vice-ministry of defense office has proven to be a success. By October 2003 the program has successfully managed to demobilize 2,486 combatants from various illegal groups. The program has also been useful in providing valuable information from testimonies given by former combatants who decide to join the program. This information has allowed to conduct the capture and posterior prosecution of 10 members from the urban network of the Antonio Narino Front in Bogota involved in the planning of terrorist plans. Also an important mid level rank commander of FARC known as Plotter decided to join the program providing invaluable knowledge of FARC and its internal sociology. Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, *Programa de Atencion Humanitaria al Desmovilizado PAHD*. Civil-Military Relations Conference in Cartagena- Colombia. October 2003.

Defense and has also demonstrated the benefits of integrating comparative perspectives and lessons learned from other systems. Future developments directly affecting the intelligence within the decision making process will explore and implement a national security protocol and the elaboration of a set of common rules and procedures across the services and agencies. The discussion and debate of the legislative tools needed to support these process such as the anti- terrorist law (Estatuto Anti-terrorista), the Anti-Kidnapping Legislation (Ley Anti- Secuestro) and the current penal alternative law for combatants (Ley de Alternatividad Penal) are currently under discussion and evaluation. Their probable outcomes are still too vague to be supported by empirical analysis, however they demonstrate that strategic policy planning in these matters usually result in legislations and laws that support the institutional consolidation of those instruments necessary in the daily business occurring within the security and defense realm of this country.

Final Considerations

There are at least four visible factors that analysts and intelligence officials believe work against the consolidation of effective tools of intelligence for strategic levels in the Colombian case. The most evident and first is that there are not many antecedents or a tradition in which the President define what are his requirements for strategic information. Second, there is a rivalry to share information between the different agencies and a lack of quality in the analytical products they deliver to decision makers. This condition impedes an integrated and effective action of the different agencies involved. Third, the process in which resources are allocated to challenge the different threats on many occasions do not match accurately to the capabilities that are necessary to thwart them. Fourth- and perhaps more crucial- in the absence of a proper organization of the instruments required to deliver strategic information, the government is still finding difficulties in identifying the áchiles heels or vulnerabilities of its adversaries and therefore limit the opportunities to apply non-traditional methods and actions.⁷⁵

These particular aspects deal also with important factors intervening within intelligence and decision-making concerning its organizational and bureaucratic requirements. Some of them pay special attention to the influence and profile of those decision makers that are chosen to lead intelligence agencies within government.⁷⁶ At the highest levels of government there is still a significant shortcoming of both experience and specialized human resources trained and prepared to handle such matters. However some of these problems have already identified by both military and civilian leaders directly involved in the coordination of efforts to consolidate a more robust strategic information system in the case under study. Other issues that influence this process and deserve perhaps a much more closer look that the one provided by this

⁷⁵ Other common features that fall into sub-categories of this four groups are that decision makers do not contribute to the operational security concerning reports and management of classified information; also the tradition of confusing and combining police investigative work with intelligence collection from other agencies as a legitimate resource to gather evidence for prosecution purposes; the absence or tradition of secrecy eliminates the element of surprise in any action against the enemy. Without an strategic information system the government cannot pursue a realistic national mobilization plan to eliminate the main threats.

⁷⁶ H. Meyer, *Real World Intelligence*, (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1987), p.88 as cited in L.Gardiner, ' Squaring the Circle', p. 149.

paper are related to the means of internal control and oversight of both activities and resources destined for intelligence matters. The role and functions of other institutions like the Comptroller Office (Contraloria) and the Ministry of Interior and Justice also fall into the list of agencies that deserve more academic research and empirical investigations that will support its improvement within the intelligence and information system of the State. Other matters that also deserve further research and academic production are the coordination of intelligence agencies and counter-intelligence procedures that could invigorate and consolidate capabilities that could contribute to the protection and elaborations of long-term objectives and plans.

As for the main matter addressed in this specific panel about intelligence it could be said that the most effective ways in which an intelligence system supporting decision-making process must be governed by a value system in which different agencies share and exchange in a coordinated, effective and timely fashion the best available options to respond effectively against threats. Both, the decision-makers and agencies should foster a permanent discussion and dialogue of alternatives and ideas that could contribute in the organization and improvement of their capabilities.

